



FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA

Grao en Lingua e Literatura Inglesas

Champion of tolerance or inveterate bigot?: a Study of Atticus Finch in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman*

Bárbara Sanmartín Cao

Constante González Groba

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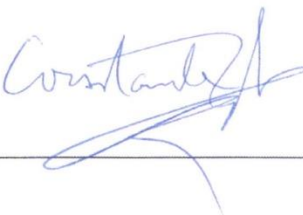

To Kill a Mockingbird and *Go Set a Watchman* are the only novels written by the acclaimed American writer Harper Lee. *Mockingbird*, one of the most important novels in modern American literature, was published in 1960. On the other hand, although *Watchman* was published in 2015 and it seems a sequel of the story, it is actually a draft written before *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This novel became controversial because of suspicions that somebody was taking advantage of a senile Harper Lee to make a quick buck, and also because it portrays a totally different Atticus Finch.

In this project I am going to focus on the protagonist's father Atticus Finch, a lawyer who in *Mockingbird* tries to bring up his children with solid values and an unfailing morality based on understanding others' points of view and situation. Moral values run around the battle between good and evil which is represented by the trial against the black Tom Robinson who is accused of raping a white girl and is defended by Atticus. This lawyer is the moral root of his family and the moral hero of the novel's setting, Maycomb, a fictional town in Alabama. The turning point of this character comes in the second novel, where his stand on the racial problem is not the same as in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Many points could be chosen for analysis in these two novels. In my project, in addition to the necessary attention to the socio-political background of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman* (the Great Depression, the 1930s, and the 1950s respectively), I will discuss a cultural point of view, taking into account social classes and education; how social classes and the issue of race in the south was used to fix the identity of the characters, as individuals and as a community. These issues will be illustrated by the character of Atticus Finch in the two novels, the study of how he changes from American hero to supremacist as well as the controversy that it creates from a personal point of view.

Santiago de Compostela, 30 de octubre de 2018.

SRA. DECANA DA FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA (Presidenta da Comisión de Títulos de Grao)

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SRA. DECANA DA FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA (Presidenta da Comisión de Títulos de Grao)

INDEX

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Contextualization.....	5
3. How to build the bigot: Atticus Finch in <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	12
3.1 Atticus through the idolizing eyes of his daughter.....	13
3.2 Atticus's social, political, racial and moral beliefs.....	19
4. The fall of the hero: Atticus Finch in <i>Go Set a Watchman</i>	31
5. Conclusions.....	45
6. Works cited.....	50

1. INTRODUCTION

This project is going to be based on *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman*, the only two novels written by the acclaimed American writer Harper Lee. *Mockingbird* is very well-known for being one of the most famous American novels that best illustrates the South in the Depression Era. It was published in 1960 and that year the novel won the Pulitzer Prize. The impact of the novel was awesome, for instance: “By 1992, Popular Library and Warner Books had issued 18 million paperback copies alone” and “In repeated surveys by the Library of Congress, it is second only to the Bible in being cited as the book that ‘most change my life’ ” (Johnson, *Reading* 135). Harper Lee’s first novel gained even more strength thanks to the success of the film adaptation. It won three Academic Awards, highlighting Best Actor for Gregory Peck and his portrait of Atticus Finch. Clearly, readers love the novel and, especially, they love its protagonist: Atticus Finch who is best-known for being a widower father, a respectable member of his community and a lawyer who defends an innocent black man- Tom Robinson- accused of raping a white girl in a society where racial segregation appears to be the order of the day.

Mockingbird gives a clear portrait of southern society in the 1930s, through the inhabitants of Maycomb, a fictional town set in Alabama. The protagonists are the Finches: Atticus Finch and his children, Jeremy Atticus Finch - known as Jem- and Jean Louise Finch- known as Scout. The novel is articulated around Tom Robinson’s case: how people react to the case and, especially, how the Finches have to deal with the consequences that Atticus is the defence attorney. Atticus became the hero that people needed by the time the novel was published. There were many reasons to love Atticus: he raised his children according to solid values based on two main mottos: “Equal rights for all, special privileges for none” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 328) and “You never really

understand a person until you consider things from his point of view [...] until you climb into his skin and walk around in it” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 39). Atticus belongs to an old and respectable family of the South and he tries to save a black man. It cannot be forgotten that by the 1960s the civil rights movement were in their zenith so, for many readers, he represented the struggle against the racial injustices and a moral example to emulate. Atticus was not only praised in literary spheres, but he was also an example for many lawyers. In my opinion, this is owing to Gregory Peck; his memorable portrait of Atticus made many people think that Atticus was a real person. Undoubtedly, Peck gave life to the character and many people dreamed of being like him. Who has not dreamed of being like a film hero? Furthermore, it was not until the 1980s-1990s that many critics, as Monroe Freedman, began to argue that Atticus Finch was not a hero and he should not set an example for lawyers. Over the years, different points of view regarding Harper Lee’s protagonist have been appearing, some critics have been bravely defending him whereas other ones have been defending a more critical position against Atticus. Where will I stand? The answer is simple: in the middle.

When critics and readers believed that Harper Lee would die without publishing another master piece, in 2015 her lawyer announced that she discovered the manuscript of Harper Lee’s novel *Go Set a Watchman* which was published in the same year. This novel became controversial since the beginning. Many critics asserted that Harper Lee, who had a delicate health condition and had lived confined in her home, did not allow to publish *Go Set a Watchman*. After the *Alabama Department of Human Resources* investigation, it was demonstrated that although Harper was sick, she wanted to publish *Watchman*. She made a personal statement in which she said that she felt “alive and kicking and happy as hell with the reactions to *Watchman*” (Epperson 119). On the other hand, it is necessary to mention that the key regarding *Watchman*’s controversy

was the drastic change in the character of Atticus. As I will explain in this study, he clearly asserts that he is not in favour of the Federal Government's measures against racial discrimination. Where is the lawyer who defends an equal treatment for all? This research is going to try to answer this controversial question. It is necessary to take into account that whereas *Mockingbird* is set in the 1930s, *Watchman* takes place in the 1950s. More than twenty years have passed and the South's social and political environment has changed as well. Atticus is seventy-two and Jean Louise is in her twenties. Atticus's daughter returns to Maycomb from New York to visit her family and she will find a great surprise at home. Her father and her town will no longer be the same. The turning point in the novel is in chapter eight, when Jean Louise finds a pamphlet of the *White Citizens Council* which belongs to her father. She attends the meeting and discovers that Atticus is a *Council's* active member; a white supremacist organization. The reader and Scout cannot reconcile the *Mockingbird's* Atticus with this new one. My objective in this research is to reconcile the two faces of Atticus: the hero and the supremacist.

My project will begin with a contextualization of the two novels in order to explain the main historical, social and political factors that influence Atticus's behaviour and the plot, since Harper Lee's novels are considered a portrait of the South in the 1930s, 1950s and 1960s. Section 3 will analyse Atticus Finch in *Mockingbird* through two sub-sections: the first one, subsection 3.1, will argue that Atticus's image is biased by Scout. The reader sees Atticus through the eyes of a child who idealizes her father. As a consequence, the reader has to read between the lines to achieve a complete image of Atticus. Besides that, sub-section 3.2 will discuss Atticus as a lawyer, highlighting much of the criticism that appeared in the 1980s and 1990s, and Atticus in Maycomb's society, paying special attention to the different social classes that articulate

this town of the Deep South. Finally, the main mottoes- as mentioned earlier- will be under analysis. Without a doubt, Atticus has an impeccable behaviour in *Mockingbird*, especially as a father. However, I will argue that despite the fact that Atticus is an example of moral conduct as well as a great father and lawyer, he is not so perfect; since he makes mistakes and he even bends the law if necessary. From my point of view, Atticus has never clearly risen against racial injustice and his heroic image has been widely overstated. These premises might appear unrelated to my theme, however, they are essential to understand why I consider that Atticus is not a bigot or a hero, just a man of his time. In the fourth section, Atticus in *Go set a Watchman* will be analysed. I will focus on Jean Louise's point of view. In this novel, she is a woman able to understand her father. She has to see her father as a common man, not as a god. In addition, Atticus's ideals will be explained, taking as reference Harper Lee's father: Amasa Coleman Lee. In the last section, my objective will be to demonstrate that Atticus is not an inveterate racist; and as stated before, he is just a man who tries to move with the times.

To conclude, with this project I am hoping to shed some light upon the controversy surrounding Atticus Finch, supporting the idea that Atticus is not a hero who all of a sudden turned drastically into a bigot. It is a slow-moving change from *To Kill a Mockingbird* to *Go Set a Watchman*.

2. CONTEXTUALIZATION

It is necessary to set both *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman* in place and time to completely understand the characters' idiosyncrasy. As Claudia D. Johnson points out in the Introduction to *Reading Harper Lee*: "Both novels are also social and historical documents that opened the eyes of many readers (even Southerners) to the racial injustices of the South in the 1930s and the 1950s."

Harper Lee's novels take place in Maycomb, a fictional place in Alabama. In *Mockingbird*, Maycomb represents the Deep South, a region where the plantations and slaves still remain in the mind of its citizens. Although the Civil War ended in 1865, and the novels are set almost a hundred years later, their roots and consequences are in the mind of the southerners who in the decade of civil rights movement and the Great Depression still see their rights and their independence in danger. We can see many reflections of this old South in some characters. For example, in the character of Mrs. Dubose who always carries a Confederacy pistol or Aunt Alexandra, the upper-class Southern lady (Johnson, *Reading* 116;118). Our protagonists, The Finches, used to have slaves and a cotton plantation which is remembered in both novels and represents an important setting, the Landing. The place where both young Scout (in *Mockingbird*) and adult Jean Louise (in *Watchman*) find relief. By contrast, the Maycomb that we find in *Watchman* represents the New South and no better than Henry Clinton (Jean Louise's love interest) to reflect this new lifestyle:

Henry ("Hank") Clinton represents the New South of politicians and businessmen. He's the rising lower-class guy with the new car, a law degree, a law partnership, and a fancy Kiwanis Club award. The values that shape his ambition are money, community respect, and political power (Johnson, *Reading* 118-119).

All the values that Henry aims to get are the ones that Atticus possesses, as it will be analysed in chapter four of this study.

It is interesting to mention how Scout defines Maycomb at the beginning of *Mockingbird*: “Maycomb was an old town, but it was a tired old town when I first knew it” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 6). This is the post-war South, the South of the Great Depression and the New Deal that we clearly find in this novel.

From a historical point of view, the 1930s are marked by a great depression that affects the whole country. Since the stock market crack of the 1929, the country fell in a deep crisis that cost a lot of jobs and sent its economy and social climate into chaos. Banks were declared in ruins and with them the financial system of the United States as well as factories were closed and plantations went bankrupt. The general climate was desolate. To put it in other words, the Depression has begun and no one is capable of stopping it. One of the regions most affected was the South because its economy was based on agriculture. The antebellum planters had been fighting to maintain their way of life for decades since the war brought the end of slavery. The South survived the Reconstruction but the 1930s threatened it with the end of its income. The time of the old white families that exclusively owned lands had ended and a new social class, represented by the Cunninghams, appeared. They were farmers who worked the land only to survive and it was common to see a lot of children who worked in the land. In short, uneducated and extremely poor people who barely had enough to eat. As a consequence, it was common to pay to doctors or lawyers not with money but with food or land products. So the result was that the whole society was declined in living standards. According to Scout: “There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with, nothing to see outside the boundaries of

Maycomb County” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 6). This is how Atticus explains this situation to Scout:

One morning Jem and I found a load of stovewood in the back yard. Later, a sack of hickory nuts appeared on the back steps. With Christmas came a crate of smilax and holly. That spring when we found a crokersack full of turning greens, Atticus said Mr. Cunningham had more than paid him.

“Why does he pay you like that?” I asked

“Because that’s the only way he can pay me. He has no money.”

[...]”Are we as poor as the Cunninghams?”

“Not exactly. The Cunninghams are country folks, farmers, and the crash hit them hardest.”

Atticus said professional people were poor because farmers were poor. (Lee, *Mockingbird* 27)

Not only white southerners had been punished with extremely poverty, but also African Americans had been suffering from hunger, fighting with whites to find a job and they had found themselves homeless. This situation only increased the difference between whites and blacks in a nation where the discontent was the general tone. In 1933, this feeling was showed by the victory for the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He presented himself as a president who was going to fight against the agricultural crisis as well as represented a ray of hope to the African American community. Roosevelt’s ace up the sleeve was the New Deal, a series of reforms that would change the whole American economy. One of the most important laws was the *National Recovery Act* (NRA) promulgated to regulate business activities, and ban child labour (which did not affect agricultural labour) and too long work hours. However, in

1935 the NRA was declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court (Johnson, *Reading* 26). To put it in Atticus's words: "[...] people had removed from their store window and automobiles the stickers that said NRA—WE DO OUR PART. I asked Atticus why, and he said it was because the National Recovery Act was dead. I asked who killed it: he said nine old men (Lee, *Mockingbird* 336).

On the other hand, it was the *Agricultural Adjustment Administration* which offered the farmers a grant if they reduced their production to raise the prizes and the income of the producers. The New Deal was presented as a miracle that could transform the nation in a new America which could leave the crisis behind but the economic recovery was so slow and critiques of these measures were born everywhere. The middle classes became afraid of losing power in favour of the low classes and, especially, black people also considered that they were treated unfairly. The already feeling of inequality between these two races had been increasing since the time of slavery but it was now when a real movement for racial justice had begun to emerge with an incredible force. The blacks could not be silenced anymore, as they were ready to fight for the rights that they obviously deserved.

With respect to the civil rights movement, this study is going to take into account a series of outstanding facts that occurred in the 1930s and 1950s which are relevant to understand the novels. Previously, it is necessary to take into account that racial segregation was always an inherent part of the South. Blacks and whites could not go to the same school or church, they had to live in different neighbourhoods and they could not seat besides whites in trains or buses. If a white passenger took the bus, they would have to give their seat if there was no one available (Johnson, *Understanding* 84-85). This is only the tip of the iceberg, as segregation went further to an unsustainable situation.

In the first place, a fact that disrupted the whole society was The Scottsboro Boys case that broke out in 1931. On March 25 of that year, a group of black boys alongside several white boys and two white girls took the train from Tennessee to Alabama. Both the white men and the nine black men fought between them along the journey. When the train arrived at Paint Rock in Alabama, all the black men and almost one white man were arrested besides the two white girls who tried to escape from the police. Immediately after, the two women, who were suspected of being prostitutes, were arrested. They accused the black men of raping them on the train. That was the beginning of a long battle in the courts for their innocence which took decades. It was not until the 1940s when they were paroled and in 1950 the last one was released from jail. Some critics pointed out the similarities between Scottsboro's case and Tom Robinson's case in *Mockingbird*, such as Claudia D. Johnson:

Both the fictional and the historical cases take place in the 1930s, a time of turmoil and change in America, and both are set in Alabama. In both, the defendants were black men and the accusers were white women. In both instances the charge was rape, which constituted, in the South, the most heinous crime imaginable and was often given as justification for brutal lynchings (Johnson, *Reading* 27).

A second major influential event was the Supreme Court decision well known as *Brown v. Board of Education* that declared illegal in the whole country the segregation in public schools. African American people had been uneducated since the time of slavery and only a limited percent of the black population was able to read and write. For example, some exceptions in the novel are Calpurnia and her son Zebo who had been educated. As a result, blacks had been fighting for years to change this situation and that culminated in this Supreme Court's ratification that the doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson* about segregation was nullified. Many southerners were angry about this

decision because they considered that it violated the 10th amendment (the powers that are not reserved exclusively to the United States belong to the states and people). Even Jean Louise in *Watchman* reacts furiously to the decision of the Court:

“Well sir, there they were, tellin’us what to do again[...] Well, in trying to satisfy one amendment, it looks like they rubbed out another one. The Tenth. It’s only one amendment, only one sentence long, but it seemed to be the one that mean the most, somehow” (Lee, *Watchman* 239).

In the third place, we should mention the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955. A heroic black woman, Rosa Parks, declined to give up her seat to a white passenger on the bus. She was arrested and an incredible and furious boycott of public transportation was carried out by the black community in response. It was one of the most violent protests from the era which culminated one year later with the desegregation of the buses.

Finally, one year after the events in Montgomery, a young black student, Autherine Lucy, was admitted to the University of Alabama as a graduate student. Even though she could study there, she was not allowed to sleep in the university dormitory or eat in the cafeteria. In addition, a series of demonstrations had been staged in the campus by men in favour of segregation, which triggered Autherine’s expulsion from the campus. This fact is mentioned in *Watchman* in one of aunt Alexandra’s coffee parties when one of her guests, Hester, defends the boys who protested about the admission of a black girl:

“[...] If it weren’t for those boys a nigger’d be goin’to classes with the rest of’em[...] Didn’t you read about those fancy professors asking those questions in that- that Convocation? Why, they’d’ve let her in. If it hadn’t been for those fraternity boys...”(Lee, *Watchman* 175)

In fact, Hester was wrong because the boys who made the riot weren't students, but workers at a factory.

This section has attempted to provide a brief summary of the more relevant racial events of the era. This battle of African Americans for their rights had another fighter in the opposite side: the supremacist whites represented by the Ku Klux Klan and *The White Citizen's Council*. The KKK had a great impact on the political, social and cultural history of the United States. The Klansmen believed in the supremacy of white people and set off a witch hunt against collectives like Blacks or Jews. This organization was behind the lynching of many black people or bomb attacks. As Claudia Johnson notes: "In 1927 the Klan mounted a reign of terror in Alabama" (Johnson, *Reading* 34). Next, in the 1950s The Council was created as a consequence of the movements to improve the rights of blacks. Its ranks were formed by people who held control over their communities, and they were considered more civilized than The Klan (Johnson, *Reading* 35) but, in effect, they also defended the superiority of the white race. On the opposite side, an association to fight against segregation and in favour of the black's civil rights was born, *The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (the NAACP). This organization was not welcomed in Maycomb, as Claudia Johnson explains: "Clearly, in the South where Jim Crow segregation and disenfranchisement of blacks were enshrined in law, the NAACP was unwelcome" (Johnson, *Reading* 36). These organizations will have a notable presence in the two novels by Harper Lee.

This section has attempted to provide a brief summary of the context in which *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman* are set in order to achieve a better understanding of the following chapters of this project.

3. HOW TO BUILD THE BIGOT: ATTICUS FINCH IN *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*

In this section I will deal with the reasons that made so many readers consider Atticus Finch as a hero in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, in order to compare him to the bigot that Harper Lee created in *Go Set a Watchman* in the next chapter.

According to Claudia D. Johnson, “The reader knows Atticus is a decent man, a wise and loving father, a caring neighbour even before his acts of public heroism occur” (Johnson, *Reading* 126). As this author points out, the reader has this impression of Atticus at the end of the book and he has been for decades an example of moral conduct as father and lawyer. According to Zwick, “Atticus is a reason people become lawyers, and, once they become lawyers, Atticus is the person many lawyers aspire to be” (Zwick 1351). However, many of the critics up to now have been opposed to Atticus as an ethical work example and Lee’s character has been revised since the 1980s and 90s.

Since the beginning we perceive Atticus through the eyes of his daughter and the parts that as a child Scout could not perceive we discover from Maycomb’s citizens too. Besides that, he has been elected as an example for lawyers as well as he has been raised as the epitome of justice and equality. These are the key points that build the foundation of the ultimate hero Atticus Finch which will be discussed in the following pages.

3. 1 ATTICUS THROUGH THE IDOLIZING EYES OF HIS DAUGHTER

It is necessary here to clarify the narrator's point of view in *Mockingbird* because the image that the reader receives of Atticus may be made vague by the speaker's voice. In Holly Blackford's words:

Mockingbird is effectively co-narrated by an older Scout, looking back on the events and her younger self, and a younger Scout, filtering the events through her consciousness, sometimes objectively and sometimes with a misplaced or skewed emphasis. [...] The two Scouts have a relationship; the older Scout offers self-mockery on the younger Scout, which gives us permission to laugh at the young Scout's feelings and concerns. [...] Lee uses the young Scout to acknowledge what white eyes can and cannot see, continually negotiating between local and transcendent perspective. (Blackford 132-133)

The public perceives Maycomb's world through the eyes of Scout and the centre of her life is Atticus. She creates an in-depth analysis of her father since the first chapter to the last. She tells us the first years of the family from her own perspective: how Atticus studied law and helped economically his brother to study medicine, how he settled in Maycomb and how her parents met and, finally, that her mother died four years after they got married. From a physical point of view, Scout tells us how Atticus looks like and even his age:

Atticus was feeble: he was nearly fifty [...] he wore glasses. He was nearly blind in his left eye, and said left eyes were the tribal curse of the Finches. Whenever he wanted to see something well, he turned his head and looked from his right eye. (Lee, *Mockingbird* 118)

In addition, she explains us his preferences:

Our father had a few peculiarities: one was, he never ate desserts; another was that he liked to walk. As far back as I could remember, there was always a Chevrolet in excellent condition in the carhouse, and Atticus put many miles on it in business trips, but in Maycomb he walked to and from his office four times a day, covering about two miles. He said his only exercise was walking. (Lee, *Mockingbird* 198)

Chapter after chapter our narrator gives us new information about Atticus's idiosyncrasy but she does not know everything about her father and some surprises are waiting for her. In the novel, there are several chapters that reflect how Scout does not get to know her father as well as she thinks. An useful example of this is chapter ten:

When Jem and I asked him why he was so old, he said he got started late, which we felt reflected upon his abilities and manliness. He was much older than the parents of our school contemporaries, and there was nothing Jem or I could say about him when our classmates said "My father—" [...] He did not do the things our schoolmates' fathers did: he never went hunting, he did not play poker or fish or drink or smoke. He sat in the livingroom and read. (Lee, *Mockingbird* 118)

It is obvious that both Jem and Scout love their father, "Jem and I found our father satisfactory: he played with us, read to us, and treated us with courteous detachment" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 6), but to them Mr. Finch looks like a man of an older time. Maybe, they believe that he is a man of words instead of a man of action. When the Finches think that there is no surprise about their parent, a mad dog threatens Maycomb's streets. Both the reader and the children get surprised when the same Atticus that does not want to teach his children to shoot turns out to be "the deadeast shot in Maycomb County" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 129). In short, he kills the mad dog in the first attempt. The eldest son is the most surprised: "'d you see him, Scout? 'd you see him just standing there? [...] he just relaxed all over, an' it looked like that gun was a part of

him [...]” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 129). The one tells the children about the past of their father is a neighbour, Miss Maudie, so it must be taken into account every point of view in order to get a complete image of Atticus Finch. It is necessary to put more emphasis on this scene because Tim Johnson is not the only one mad dog that Atticus is going to fight with. Many critics have asserted that the real mad dog of the novel is the people of Maycomb, borrowing the words of Carolyn Jones:

Like the dog infected with rabies, the citizens of Maycomb are infected with Maycomb’s “usual disease”, racism, which makes them just as irrational and just as dangerous as Tim Johnson. Atticus’s neighbours and friends, therefore, are those “mad dogs” that he must confront. (Bloom 101)

Nevertheless, racism in Maycomb is something not so easy to kill. Maybe, it is a “disease” that has even infected our hero as well. There are several scenes along the novel, especially the part concerning Tom Robinson’s case, that shows Scout a different side of Atticus.

Firstly, in chapter twenty Scout and Jem are again witness of a new face of their father:

Atticus paused, then he did something he didn’t ordinarily do. He unhitched his watch and chain and placed them on the table [...] did something I never saw him do before or since, in public or in private: he unbuttoned his vest, unbuttoned his collar, loosened his tie, and took off his coat. He never loosened a scrap of his clothing until he undressed at bedtime, and to Jem and me, this was the equivalent of him standing before us stark naked. We exchanged horrified glances. (Lee, *Mockingbird* 270-271)

Immediately after, he begins his speech to the jury. As a result of this, the hero is destroying his high position on the court to take a lower position besides the rest of the

human beings. Consequently, the reader and his children see them as never before, he is always spotless and elegant but now he could be like all the citizens of Maycomb. To put it in Claudia Johnson's words: "people are to be regarded as individuals, human beings, not as dehumanized types" (Bloom 72). In the novel, Atticus tries to humanize Tom Robinson to the jury at the same time that he is himself naked, putting them at the same level. This is something that Scout has never seen before, as a child she does not understand what her father is doing, but in a critical way it may be the bravest action of her father.

Secondly, he is not a lax father. Although he has never hit them, he is rough if the situation is needed. Understandably, he puts in doubt his own methods and being an incompetent father is a constantly concern for him. This is a key point in the real understanding of this widower father because it is only when Atticus directly speaks that we certainly know what he is really thinking or feeling without being biased by Scout. Both Scout and the readers discover his view of fatherhood in chapter thirty, after Boo Radley kills Bob Ewell in order to save Jem and Scout's live:

"[...]If this thing's hushed up it'll be a simple denial to Jem of the way I've tried to raise him. Sometimes I think I'm a total failure as a parent, but I'm all they've got. Before Jem looks at anyone else he looks at me, and I've tried to live so I can look squarely back at him... If I connived at something like this, frankly I couldn't meet his eye, and the day I can't do that I'll know I've lost him. I don't want to lose him and Scout, because they've all I've got. [...] if they don't trust me they won't trust anybody. Jem and Scout know what happened. If they hear of me saying downtown different happened- Heck, I won't have them any more. I can't live one way in town and another way in my home" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 366-367).

This conversation between Atticus and sheriff Hake Tate about Boo Radley's culpability in Bob Ewell's death is one of the turning points in the novel for several reasons. First of all, despite his words, Atticus is going to accept what Sheriff Tate asserts, to protect Boo Radley because is the correct thing to do. Earlier in the novel, Atticus asserts: "Sometimes it's better to bend the law a little in special cases" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 40). Many critics have stated that this is a hypocritical position and that it is not proper from a lawyer and a state bar legislator (Smith 162). It might be contradicted and it might cause confusion in the reader because of his position that all the human beings are only treated as equals in the court:

"But there is one way in this country in which all men are created equal- there is one human institution that makes a pauper the equal of a Rockefeller, the stupid man the equal of an Einstein, and the ignorant man the equal of any college president. That institution, gentlemen, is a court. [...] Our courts have their faults, as does any human institution, but in this country our courts are the greater levellers, and in our courts all men are created equal" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 274).

If he really thinks so, why is someone with his strong beliefs carried away by Tate? In addition, it may be answered by Gladwell: "[...] he both 'obstructs justice' and reveal once more his double standard based on class. He is willing to afford the respectable Radley a level of kindness[...] that he would never afford the white trash Ewells" (Smith 150). Without a doubt, he does not actually believe in the equal rights, that some people should go confront the law and some people could be turning a blind eye. To sum up, it contradicts one of the most relevant mottos of the novel as well as how Atticus is defined by both the neighbours and his children: "Atticus don't ever do anything to Jem and me in the house that he don't do in the yard. [...] Atticus Finch is the same in his house as he is on the public streets [...]" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 61).

Furthermore, this cathartic moment supports the idea that Atticus is aware of what he represents to his children, a model, to put it in other words, an idolized figure that they try to emulate. Additionally, the readers may see an insecure side of their hero that implies the fall of the pedestal that they had kept him during the novel. He is not a perfect father, but a normal parent who has a lot of doubts like the millions that have read this story.

Finally, Scout has learnt from her father to be critical and to maintain her true self. He is the moral lantern of his children. Every time they have a doubt they go to Atticus in search of an answer and it is certain that they will find one. Besides them, the reader is going to expect the response from him. At this time in the South it could be expected that Scout should conduct herself as a young southern lady, similar to her aunt Alexandra. On the contrary, she likes spending her time playing with boys, and, instead of wearing delicate dresses, she prefers overalls. Atticus has never complained about Scout's behaviour, on the contrary, he insists that she does not represent a problem: "I asked him if I was a problem and he said not much of one, at most one that he could always figure out, and not to worry my head a second about botherin' him" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 302). As a consequence, the young Scout does not understand why her aunt Alexandra has come to live with them, or why Atticus should want a female influence on his daughter. In chapter thirteen, Atticus tries to explain to his children that The Finches have always belonged to a high class, so they have to behave in accordance with their social position in order to please his sister Alexandra. It is clear that this conversation disturbs Atticus, "I don't exactly know how to say this" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 177); so it ends in an abrupt way. Scout is not used to seeing her father angry and she blames it on Alexandra's influence. At this point, young Scout does not recognise her father: "This was not my father. My father never thought these thoughts.

My father never spoke so. Aunt Alexandra had put him up to this, somehow” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 178). Scout fails to follow the conversations or the intentions of her father. She is not allowed to understand because of her age, which restricts her point of view in the novel. In contrast, Jean Louise (an older Scout) may be ready to get to know her father as she explains at the end of the chapter: “I know now what he was trying to do, but Atticus was only a man. It takes a woman to do that kind of work” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 179).

In summary, in this section we have seen the limitations of Scout’s point of view. As a child she has an incredible view of things such as racism or injustice but she is unable to understand certain situations or to see some sides of her father. Nevertheless, she is going to get wiser when she gets older. It is in that opposition between the young Scout and the older Jean Louise where the true Atticus is hidden: the Atticus of flesh and bone unlike the idealized one. As it is going to be explained in chapter four, the two Harper Lee’s novels create a double dimension. The dimension of *Mockingbird* where Scout (besides the readers) lives with and admires her perfect father, a hero in all the senses and the other dimension of *Watchman* where Jean Louise is an adult and has to confront the reality that she has never been getting ready to admit.

3.2 ATTICUS’S SOCIAL, POLITICAL , RACIAL AND MORAL BELIEFS

So far section 3.1 has focused on how the reader has been given a limited view of Atticus through his daughter Scout. This section will discuss Atticus’s social position and his relationship with Maycomb’s inhabitants; Atticus as a lawyer and, finally, the protagonist’s main mottos that have supposedly governed his life.

In the first place, Maycomb is inhabited by so many kinds of folks. This is clearly explained by a popular citizen of this town of the South, Jeremy Atticus Finch:

“[...] I’ve thought about it a lot lately and I’ve got it figured out. There’s four kinds of folks in the world. There’s the ordinary kind like us and the neighbors, there’s the kind like the Cunninghams out in the woods, the kind like the Ewells down at the dump, and the Negroes” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 302).

There is nothing better than a young boy’s naïve view of the world. Jem explains exactly how Maycomb’s society is articulated. This idea has been supported by many critics, such as Fred Erisman:

Miss Lee’s characters fall readily into four classes, ranging from the “old Aristocracy” represented by Atticus’s Finch class-conscious sister, Alexandra, to the poor white trash represented by Bob Ewell and his brood, who have been “the disgrace of Maycomb for three generations” (Bloom 41).

The position of the Finches is an important feature for Atticus’s image as a hero because he has in part the respect of his neighbours as a consequence of belonging to a good old family, typical of the South. No one can deny that Atticus is well known for respecting all his neighbours, he has taught his children to be respectful too. For instance, he tells his children not to make fun of anyone in Maycomb when they are representing a play about the Radleys, and he compels Scout to not to fight with her classmates and even severely punishes Jem to read to Mrs. Dubose after he destroyed her camellias. This is mutual, as Maycomb respects Atticus as well. This is clearly exemplified when Atticus is leaving the court at the end of Tom Robinson’s trial and everyone gets up. Reverend Sykes tells Scout: “Miss Jean Louise, stand up. Your father’s passin” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 283). This is an unmistakable signal of respect. It is

also confirmed by his continued election to the state legislature, even after he represented Tom Robinson's case.

To begin with, the respectable people of Maycomb are made up of the Finches and their neighbours. Historically, many of them are descendants of the old planter class who owned slaves, though in Roosevelt's era, they are bankers, doctors, lawyers and other professionals. All of them have something in common: they strongly believe that they belong to an upper class, and they all firmly believe in their roots as southerners. The paragon of this class is represented by Aunt Alexandra. She is described by Scout as follows:

Her Missionary Society refreshments added to her reputation as a hostess[...] she joined and became Secretary of the Maycomb Amanuensis Club. To all parties present and participating in the life of the county, Aunt Alexandra was one of the last of her kind: she had river-boat, boarding-school manners; let any moral come along and she would uphold it; she was born in the objective case; she was an incurable gossip.[...] She never let a chance escape her to point out the shortcomings of other tribal groups to the greater glory or our own. [...] Aunt Alexandra was of the opinion, obliquely expressed, the longer a family had been squatting on one patch of land the finer it was. (Lee, *Mockingbird* 172-173)

There are many times when Atticus and Alexandra have opposed points of view but, at the end, they classify people in a similar way. Alexandra classifies people by their social class, whereas Atticus classifies them by their intellect and knowledge. It is at the end something related with social class because many children cannot go to school because they have to work in the land. This reflects an elitist aspect in Atticus, and how he sees other classes is clear in the novel.

On the other hand, the Cunninghams from Old Sarum are described as “an enormous and confusing tribe domiciled in the northern part of the county, and they formed the nearest thing to a gang ever seen in Maycomb” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 12). These are the days of the Great Depression and although they have not enough money, “The Cunninghams never took anything they can’t pay back [...] They never took anything off of anybody, they get along on what they have. They don’t have much, but they get along on it” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 26). Atticus thinks that they came from “a set breed of men” (Lee *Mockingbird* 28). Walter Cunningham is one of the men who make up the mob against Tom Robinson in the door of the jail. The mobs in this period of racial oppression and prejudice against blacks were something so serious because racial tensions were high. It could be expected that someone like Atticus who is totally against violence would condemn this type of behaviour but, nonetheless, he tries to justify them when Scout asks him about what has happened:

“Mr. Cunningham’s basically a good man”, he said “he just has his blind spots along with the rest of us [...] you’ll understand folks a little better when you’re older. A mob’s always made up of people, no matter what. Mr. Cunningham was part of a mob last night, but he was still a man. Every mob in every little Southern town is always made up of people you know—doesn’t say much for them, does it? [...] That proves something—that a gang of wild animals can be stopped, simply because they’re still human. Hmp, maybe we need a police force of children...you children last night made Walter Cunningham stand in my shoes for a minute. That was enough” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 210).

One can infer from this speech that Atticus is in favour of the mob, and initially it would seem so; but, in my opinion, he is just a man of the South, who knows it perfectly and just goes with the flow in order to have a calm life.

Undoubtedly, one of the most relevant social classes are the Ewells. Atticus defines them as follows:

Atticus said the Ewells had been the disgrace of Maycomb for three generations. None of them had done an honest day's work in his recollection. He said that some Christmas, when he was getting rid of the tree, he would take me with him and show me where and how they lived. They were people, but they lived like animals. "They can go to school any time they want to, when they show the faintest symptom of wanting an education" said Atticus. "there are ways of keeping them in school by force, but it's silly to force people like the Ewells into a new environment--"[...] "You, Miss Scout Finch, are the common folk. You must obey the law" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 40).

In this passage Atticus affirms that Scout belongs to a high class, way far above the Ewells. She is a Miss and she has to obey the law, as well as go to school. Atticus thinks that the Ewells do not deserve an education, and for him people who are not educated belong to the bottom of the social scale. Undoubtedly, there is nothing more deplorable to Atticus than the illiterate people. He is going to define them even as Aunt Alexandra constantly does: "Atticus said they were absolute trash---I never heard Atticus talk about folks the way he talked about the Ewells" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 164). It is essential to recognise that there is an opposition between Atticus and Ewell, to put it in the words of Claudia Johnson:

Ewell and Atticus are pointedly opposite, however. Ewell hunts even out of season; Atticus refuses to hunt at all. Ewell takes his children from school, while Atticus will not allow the dissatisfied Scout to be a truant. Ewell obviously beats Mayella viciously; Atticus has "never laid a hand" on his children. Atticus is selfless in his love for Scout; Ewell is self-gratifying in his sexual abuse of Mayella. In sum, violence has been

superceded in Atticus' life by love and laws; the violence of Ewell's life is untempered by sanity (Bloom 73).

Lee presents them to us as real opposites so, it could be understood that Atticus treats them as the worst people in the town because readers feel the same. Their relationship is so complicated, without a doubt that the feeling is mutual. The Ewells, both Mayella and her father, really hate Atticus. He represents all that they could never achieve. During the trial, Mayella constantly feels that Atticus is making fun of her when he asks her about her friends or refers to her as a Madam, " Won't answer a word you say long as you keep on mockin'me" [...] You main'fun o'me agin, Mr. Finch" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 243-245). We should not forget the scene when Bob Ewell spits in Atticus's face and, finally, the episode when he tries to kill Jem and Scout. Atticus and Ewell never come to understanding each other, and readers take Atticus's side because he is our hero.

From a racial point of view, the focus of the controversy in the novel is on the black people of Maycomb and their relationship with Atticus. During decades *Mockingbird* was seen as an example of racial justice and Atticus as the symbol of the fight for the civil rights. Many years later, *Watchman* was published and a different side of Atticus came to light. He is not more the defender of the blacks, on the contrary, he is the perfect example of a moderate racist. If we read *Mockingbird* critically, we can already detect some clues of Atticus' not so progressive ideas about African Americans.

There are two main black figures in the novel: Calpurnia, the Finches' housekeeper, and Tom Robinson, a black man falsely accused of raping the white girl Mayella Ewell. Everybody accepts that Calpurnia is always treated with respect by the Finches, and that she is loved by them. Atticus even defends her in front of his sister:

“Alexandra, Calpurnia’s not leaving this house until she wants to. You may think otherwise, but I couldn’t have got along without her all these years. She’s a faithful member of this family and you’ll simply have to accept things the way they are. [...] Besides, I don’t think the children’ve suffered one bit from her having brought them up. If anything she’s been harder on them in some ways than a mother would have been... she’s never indulged them the way most colored nurses do. She tried to bring them up according to her lights, and Cal’s lights are pretty good—and another thing, the children love her” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 182-183).

One reason because Atticus respects Cal is because, unlike most of the blacks, she could read and write. In Atticus’ words: “Atticus said Calpurnia had more education than most colored folks” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 32). This is certainly true because it was Cal who teaches Scout to write and read with her Bible. In addition, Atticus always tells his children to obey Calpurnia. It may not be forgotten that at this time, it was common to take a black nurse. It was considered acceptable for everyone and a symbol of a good economic situation. She has made the life of Atticus easier by raising his children in the good manners and he treats her in consequence with respect. It looks like for Atticus it is more a question of politeness than a real love for her. In the novel, there are two turning points where Atticus expresses what he really thinks about the black people: chapter twenty gives us a clue: “Atticus says cheatin’a colored man is ten times worse than cheatin’a white man,[...] Says it’s the worst thing you can do” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 269). Moreover, in chapter twenty-three Atticus says:

“As you grow older, you’ll see white men cheat black men every day of your life, but let me tell you something and don’t you forget it—whenever a white man does that to a black man, no matter who he is, how rich he is, or how fine a family comes from, that white man is trash”[...]his face was vehement. “There’s nothing more sickening to me than a low-grade white man who’ll take advantage of a Negro’s ignorance. Don’t fool

yourselves—it's all adding up and one of these day we're going to pay the bill for it. I hope it's not in you children's time" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 295-296).

Scout is not capable of reading between the lines of this vehement discourse, but it may be seen that for him blacks and whites are not equals, that for him blacks are an inferior race and that cheating them because they are inferior could be like a sin. As Diann L. Baecker puts it: "Atticus's harsh judgment stems from the fact that the white man and the black man are not perceived as being equal. Taking advantage of an ignorant, humble Negro is like kicking a dog or taking candy from a child; it is capitalizing on your superior position" (Hall 71). Personally, this is a clear racist point of view because the root of racism lies in considering one race more inferior than the other one.

In the second place, over the last decades, Atticus has been praised for being a lawyer who revolts against racism when he takes the defence of a black man in the segregated South. It has not been until the 1980s and 90s that many lawyers have refuted this premise. One of the hardest critics is Monroe Freedman. This author not only explains why Atticus should not be an example for lawyers, but he also gives the reason that drives Atticus to take Tom Robinson's case:

Finch would prefer not to have been appointed but, recognizing his duty as a member of the bar, he carries out the representation zealously. He even risks his own life to protect Robinson from a lynch mob. [...] Finch acts as he does because he is a gentleman. [...] Atticus Finch does, indeed, act heroically in his representation of Robinson. But he does so from an elitist sense of noblesse oblige. [...] Finch never attempts to change the racism and sexism that permeate the life of Maycomb[...] On the contrary, he lives his own life as the passive participant in that pervasive injustice (Johnson, *Understanding* 189;190).

In the novel it is asserted that Atticus has been elected by Judge Taylor to take this case and he explains directly how he feels about it, in fact, he is not glad to have to take it. Scout does not understand why Atticus is taking Tom Robinson's case or why the town is reacting so angrily. He is called "Nigger-lover" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 110) and even the life of his children is put at risk. In chapter nine, Atticus tries to explain it to Scout:

"If you shouldn't be defendin' him, then why are you doin' it?"

"For a number of reasons," said Atticus. "The main one is, if I couldn't hold up my head in town, I couldn't represent his county in the legislature, I couldn't even tell you or Jem not to do something again."

"You mean if you didn't defend that man, Jem and me wouldn't have to mind you any more?"

"That's about right."

"Why?"

"Because I could never ask you to mind me again. Scout, simply the nature of the work, every lawyer gets at least one case in his lifetime that affects him personally. This one mine, I guess [...]"

"Atticus, are we going to win it?"

"No, honey."

"Then why---"

"Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 100-101).

After this explanation we can get some key facts. Atticus is elected, so he has not chosen the case in order to defend an innocent black man. In all the previous passage, he has never mentioned Tom Robinson or his innocence, he is only talking about his responsibilities, his honour or his motivations. So he is defending this black man only for his own blessing, not for the sake of justice or to fight against racial injustice in the South (Metress 101). Without a doubt, and to put a point in favour of him, Atticus always acts with his children in mind. He always tries to be an example to them and it is clear that he has taken this case in part for them, even when the consequences will be disastrous for them.

Lastly, the most important mottos of the novel, which also appeared in *Go Set a Watchman*, come from Atticus. In the first place, this widower father tries to teach his children respect for everyone and for this he asserts: “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view [...] until you climb into his skin and walk around in it” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 39). He encourages them to understand and respect their neighbours every day. On the other hand, Atticus always shares his points of view about politics or law with his children, and he always talks to them as if they were adults. For example, he not only lets them call him Atticus instead of Mr. or father, but he also reads with them the newspapers and explains to them the political controversies of the time. For these reasons, Scout is able to define in the school what democracy means: “ I raised my hand, remembering an old campaign slogan that Atticus once told me about [...] Equal rights for all, special privileges for none” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 328).

Reading this, an image of Atticus as a noble and wise man could be begin to build, because this mottos should be applied at every time for everyone. Scout firmly believes that Atticus’ actions are governed by his ideals, but that is not entirely true.

Putting oneself in the other's shoes implies a deep understanding of his motivations and behaviour, but Atticus has failed several times in this. As Deborah Barker proposes:

Ultimately, what the novel portrays in Atticus is a good but flawed man who tries to live by a motto that he never fully understands: how to "consider things from [the other person's] point of view"[...] Atticus, however, can neither put himself in the skin of a black man nor that of a lower-class white man, and this failure puts both his children and his client in danger. Atticus underestimates Bob Ewell's capacity for violence, underestimates the jury's ability or willingness to understand his closing arguments, underestimates how devastated Tom Robinson is by the verdict, and, most important, is blind to the possibility that Tom was shot in cold blood, not while trying to escape. (Barker 180)

Moreover, as previously stated, he has not applied his motto of equal rights for everyone, especially with the Ewells. He does not believe that they have to follow the law and go to school, or that Bob Ewell's death at the hands of Boo Radley should be put in front of a jury.

To sum up, taking all this into account, is Atticus the hero that critics and readers have been defending for decades? Maybe he is not a hero, but definitely he is a good father and a gentleman. He lives without disturbing his neighbours and trying to do right in every respect. He is just a man of his time who tries to live calmly in the South. Also he respects his roots and his land's beliefs without disturbing anyone. In spite of the fact that defending an African American in Alabama is almost "a sin", he tries to do that without disturbing his neighbours: "We are fighting our friends. But remember this, no matter how bitter things get, they're still our friends and this is still our home" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 102). Although he fails to understand his neighbours, he compels his children to do it. He lives in a passive way, he wants to just raise his children, do his job

as well as he can and read his newspaper with his daughter in his lap without any change or any disturbing in his world. Borrowing Deborah Barker words again, though he is not a hero, he is an example for: “[...] how to be nominally progressive in the South while maintaining segregation, preserving the power of the educated elite (who are best able to decide who deserves civil rights and who does not), keeping your friends, and getting reelected” (Barker 198).

4. THE FALL OF THE HERO: ATTICUS IN *GO SET A WATCHMAN*

In the previous section, it was argued Atticus Finch in Harper Lee's first published novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. To sum up, *Mockingbird's* Atticus is well known for being a role model father, a great lawyer, a good neighbour and a calm person who despite wanting to live in tranquillity besides his two children, he defends an innocent black man. However, what we will find in *Watchman* is a different character who wants to fight against the Federal Government and he is not in favour of the African Americans's integration in the white world. To put it in Claudia D. Johnson's words:

[...] he justifies the council. He hates the federal government and the NAACP. He discloses that he, like the man at the meeting, believes black people are a lower form of civilization, incapable of participating in government, and threatening to white culture. And he is a dyed-in-the-wool segregationist. (Johnson, *Reading* 132-133)

Although there are some clues in *To Kill a Mockingbird* about the real Atticus (as this research argued in the previous section), it is a great surprise the turning point of this character in *Go Set a Watchman*. The reasons of this change have been the subject of intense debate within the literary community as well as the basis of this dissertation. This debate may be summarized in one question: is Atticus Finch a hero or a bigot? To answer this question, one must first understand exactly what Atticus thinks about politics and race. On the other hand, it must be taken into account that whereas the point of view in *Mockingbird* is limited by young Scout, in *Watchman* there is a third person narrator based on an adult Jean Louise. In *Watchman*, Jean Louise is able to really understand her father. In fact, she will see another side of Atticus and of Maycomb. As a consequence, Jean Louise, besides the reader, will not be more "color blind" (Lee, *Watchman* 122).

The section that follows is going to explain the fall of Atticus Finch from a moral model to a bigot based on two premises that complement each other: the change in the point of view of Jean Louise that allows the reader to see a real Atticus and the explanation of Atticus Finch's beliefs which are based on Harper Lee's father's own ideals.

To begin with, despite the fact that *Go Set a Watchman* is narrated by a third-person narrator, the reader is again confined by the eyes of Jean Louise, an adult Scout (Johnson, *Reading* 45). Unlike *Mockingbird*'s Scout, a twenty-six Jean Louise is able to see her real father. Her return from New York will be a cathartic moment in her life which will change the relationship with her father and her roots. It will be developed in this section by several factors which will be exemplified by some *Watchman*'s chapters.

First of all, in chapter two, it may have a premonition:

He had been a big man before age and arthritis reduced him to medium size. He was seventy-two last month, but Jean Louise always thought of him as hovering somewhere in his middle fifties—she could not remember him being any younger, and he seemed to grow no older. (Lee, *Watchman* 17)

It seems that Jean Louise clings to the image of Atticus that she had when she was a child. For her, he does not get older or change at all, he will always be the same “big man” that she got to know as Scout, but this reality will change very soon. What Atticus means to *Mockingbird*'s readers is explained by his daughter in chapter nine as follows:

Jean Louise has never known her mother, and she never knew what a mother was, but she rarely felt the need of one. [...] She did not stand alone, but what stood behind her, the most potent moral force in her life, was the love of her father. She never questioned

it, never thought about it, never even realized that before she made any decision of importance the reflex, “What would Atticus do?” passed through her unconscious; she never realized what made her dig in her feet and stand firm whenever she did was her father; that whatever was decent and of good report in her character was put there by her father; she did not know that she worshiped him. (Lee, *Watchman* 117-118)

In addition, Atticus has been the moral root of his family and his community. Despite the fact that he also commits mistakes as any human, as I mentioned earlier in this dissertation, he is a good man who always acts following his solid values based on a solid code: “his private character was his public character” (Lee, *Watchman* 114). He has never been impolite with anyone and he has never been clear opposite to the black community. However, a twist in the plot occurs in chapter eight. Jean Louise finds the pamphlet of the *Maycomb White Citizens Council*. It is necessary to explain what the pamphlet is talking about in order to understand the magnitude of the situation: “On its cover was a drawing of an anthropophagous Negro; above the drawing was printed *The Black Plague*” (Lee, *Watchman* 101). Jean Louise immediately thinks that this paper is from her aunt Alexandra, so she confronts her and she makes clear what she thinks about the pamphlet in an ironic tone:

“[...] I especially liked the part where the Negroes, bless their hearts, couldn’t help being inferior to the white race because their skulls are ticker and their brain- pans shallower-whatever that means- so we must all be very kind to them and not let them do anything to hurt themselves and keep them in their places. [...] I was real impressed with the parable where since the dawn of history the rulers of the world have always been white, except Genghis Khan [...] even the Pharaohs were whites and their subjects were either black or Jews” (Lee, *Watchman* 102-103).

By the time, 1960s, the *White Citizens Council* represented some beliefs supported by white supremacist, beliefs that Atticus Finch seems to share. Borrowing Jean Louise's words again, the Council was "the people who were the Invisible Empire, who hated Catholics; ignorant, fear-ridden, red-faced, boorish, law-abiding, one hundred percent red-blooded Anglo-Saxons, her fellow Americans- trash" (Lee, *Watchman* 104). Jean Louise explains that they are former members of the Ku Klux Klan. It must be mentioned that Atticus has been severely criticized because in *Mockingbird* he trivialized and lied about the Klan to Jem. He asserted that the Klan was a political organization that disappeared for ever (Lee, *Mockingbird* 196). Even in chapter sixteen of *Watchman*, Henry reveals to Jean Louise that when Atticus was young, he joined the Klan and went to only one meeting. Henry explains that Atticus just tried to get to know who were behind the masks. In my opinion, many critics who assert that Atticus supports the Klan are completely wrong because Atticus is totally against violence. He is a lawyer and as Uncle Jack affirms: "The law is what he lives by. He'll do his best to prevent someone from beating up somebody else [...] he'll always do it by the letter and by the spirit of the law. That's the way he lives" (Lee, *Watchman* 268). Although he does not support the Ku Klux Klan, it is a fact that he has joined the *Council*. After that, Jean Louise needs answers, so she goes to the meeting. It is necessary to point out the connections between *Mockingbird* and *Watchman* in chapter eight. In *Mockingbird*, Scout, Jem and Dill were sitting in a balcony that black people used to sit in the court, Jean Louise has chosen the same place to see Atticus in *Watchman* ("[...] walked out into it, and took her old place in the corner of the front row, where she and her brother had sat when they went to court to watch his father" (Lee, *Watchman* 105)). Besides that, while she is listening the members of the Council, she remembers the principal Atticus's motto which has been mentioned before in

Mockingbird: “She heard her father’s voice, a tiny voice talking in the warm and comfortable past. *Gentlemen, if there’s one slogan in this world I believe, it is this: equal rights for all, special privileges for none*” (Lee, *Watchman* 108). However, this time Jean Louise has left the court alone and sick, nobody has risen in signal of respect when her father was passing as happening in *Mockingbird* (Lee, *Mockingbird* 283). The only thing that can help her is to remember the pleasant past.

In the third place, in chapter fourteen Jean Louise is so confused about what happens to Atticus that she looks for an answer in Uncle Jack’s words. This confusion can be made worse by the fact that Jack is not clear about Atticus’s ideology, he tries to pave the way for her confrontation with Atticus. Jack in spite of talking about her father, he is remembering to Jean Louise the South’s history. In addition, this chapter sets a clear opposition between the two novels. In *Mockingbird* Atticus is called “Nigger-lover” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 110), whereas in *Watchman* Jean Louise refers to her father as a “Nigger-hater” (Lee, *Watchman* 188). One can infer from this opposition that it perfectly reflects the evolution of Atticus from defending an innocent black man in *Mockingbird* to being racist in *Watchman*. No one could be prepared for it and Jean Louise less than anyone:

“[...] You now, you treat all people alike. I’ve never in my life seen you give that insolent, back-of-the-hand treatment half the white people down here give Negroes just when they’re talking to them, just when they ask’em to do something. There’s no get-along-there-nigger in your voice when you talk to ’em [...] You deny them hope. [...] They are simple people, most of them, but that doesn’t make them subhuman. [...] You are using frightful means to justify ends that you think are for the good of the most people.” (Lee, *Watchman* 251)

Aside from that, If Jean Louise wants answers, she has to confront Atticus. Consequently, in chapter seventeen, father and daughter are face to face. Jean Louise is not only angry about Atticus's attendance to the meeting, in fact, her reasons are more complicated. She has not only lost her idolized father, but she has also lost her town. She is not blind anymore, she has seen the real face of Maycomb because in the meeting there are a lot of familiar faces (prominent Maycomb's inhabitants as well as Jean Louise's love interest Henry Clinton) and she does not enjoy what she has found in her return home. Of course, she feels betrayed and without a home: "I'll never forgive you for what you did me. You cheated me, you've driven me out of my home and now I'm in a no-man's-land but good- there's no place for me any more in Maycomb, and I'll never be entirely at home anywhere else" (Lee, *Watchman* 248). Readers go hand in hand with Jean Louise, they feel the betrayal as she feels and they have lost their moral figure as well. This chapter has the greatest impact on the relationship between Atticus and his daughter than any other before. Without a doubt, it explains why Atticus is considered a bigot and the point of view of Scout vs. Jean Louise in both *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman* respectively. It is reflected on the dialogue that follows:

"[...] I believe in you . I looked up to you, Atticus, like I never looked up to anybody in my life and never will again [...] You've cheated me in a way that's inexpressible, but don't let it worry you, because the joke is entirely on me. You're the only person I think I've ever fully trusted and now I' done for."

"I've killed you, Scout. I had to. [...] I loved you." (Lee, *Watchman* 249-250; 252-253)

Scout has been idealizing Atticus during all her childhood in the same way that the reader has been doing as well, but now she is an adult and it is time to see him as a real person, not as a hero. Atticus is only a human with his own beliefs. Besides that,

some great questions may arise: What does Atticus really believe? Is he tolerant or radical? To answer these questions it is necessary to take into account Harper Lee's father Amasa Coleman Lee. In fact, many critics have supported the idea that Atticus Finch is based on Amasa Coleman Lee. As Hannah Epperson notes:

Harper Lee found the right character for her message in Atticus Finch, whom she based on her father, A. C. Lee. Harper Lee called *To Kill a Mockingbird* "a love story pure and simple", referring to the unyielding love between a father and daughter [...] the relationship between Scout and Atticus did mirror that between Harper Lee and her father [...]. (Epperson 122)

There are several similarities between these two men: both men are lawyers and they have won the respect of their community which is reflected in their election to a public service position. In addition, Harper Lee affirmed that the motto of the novel which defends that the humans deserve be treated as equals comes from her father (Epperson 123). Even the death of Jem that is mentioned in *Watchman* is based on the death of Harper Lee's brother. Therefore, in her search for inspiration, Lee easily found a great model in her father. She looked to her father to build Atticus's conscience and ideals. To put it in other words, as Joseph Crespino asserts: "To understand Atticus Finch, it is necessary to recover the political struggles that preoccupied her father, a lawyer, state legislator, and a newspaper editor in Monroeville, Alabama, which were the same struggles that preoccupied Harper Lee herself" (Crespino xviii).

In my opinion, Atticus shares Amasa's political and racial point of view. So, I will analyse A. C. Lee's ideals in order to clarify Atticus's political and racial views. For example, borrowing again Joseph Crespino's words, Amasa was a conservationist:

A.C. Lee had always tended toward the conservative side of things. As a state legislator he mostly voted with the Black Belt, the swath of counties in south-central Alabama.[...] Being conservative meant that you didn't spend money that you didn't have, you didn't wear flashy clothes or buy expensive cars, you didn't show off, or brag, or gossip, you weren't lazy, you didn't say a thing in town and something else at home, and you were polite, particularly to those less fortunate than you (Crespino 40-41).

Several similarities may be found in Atticus: he is against gossip, he always advises his children to mind their own business (Lee, *Mockingbird* 13) and they must not disturb their neighbours, "We were not [...] make fun of anybody on this street or in this town" (Lee, *Mockingbird* 65). On the other hand, it cannot be denied that one of the most common definitions of Atticus Finch is that he is the same in the street as he is in his home (Lee, *Mockingbird* 61) or that he is always polite to Maycomb's inhabitants. Consequently, from a political point of view, it may be asserted that Atticus Finch is also a conservationist.

On the other hand, *Watchman's* chapter seventeen is crucial because it shows what Atticus Finch really thinks about African Americans and the NAACP and why Atticus attends the meetings of the *White Citizens Council*. To quote from Atticus: "I can tell you the two reasons I was there. The Federal Government and the NAACP. Jean Louise, what was your first reaction to the Supreme Court decision? [...] I was furious [...] there they were, tellin' us what to do again" (Lee, *Watchman* 239). Atticus and Jean Louise are discussing about the decision of the Supreme Court about the illegality of segregation in schools that is well known as *Brown vs Board of education*. Many people felt threatened by this government's decision because they thought that it violated the 10th amendment. It is one of the reasons that move Atticus as well as many southerners

to fight against integration, because they felt like they lost some fundamental rights in favour of a minority. Atticus defines itself as a kind of “Jeffersonian Democrat” (Lee, *Watchman* 244) and he defines Jefferson’s beliefs as follows:

“[...] Jefferson believed full citizenship was a privilege to be earned by each man, that it was not something given lightly nor to be taken lightly. A man couldn’t vote simply because he was a man, in Jefferson’s eyes. He had to be a responsible man. A vote was, to Jefferson, a precious privilege a man attained for himself in a – a live-and-let-live economy.” (Lee, *Watchman* 244)

Atticus stands without a doubt in clear opposition to the blacks’ right to vote. This was a current discussion in the South in the 1960s. Southerners like Atticus were concerned about blacks voting in mass and achieving a position in the state government. This opposition to the vote of the black community is also supported by A. C. Lee: “Voting was a right of citizenship, but it was also a responsibility not to be taken lightly. [...] vital matters of public concern would be decided by a serious, deliberate, responsible citizenry” (Crespino 45). In fact, many critics, as Joseph Crespino, have defended that Harper Lee took this “jeffersonianism” from her father who had defended Jefferson’s ideals in his editorials many times: “The happiest people are those who own their own homes and farms, and who are largely independent [...] They are the ones who are free to think carefully, and to pursue their duties as citizens and as members of society fearlessly”(Crespino 90). Both Atticus and Amasa support the idea that full citizenship is a privilege and that the ones who are able to vote carefully are those who are not under the Federal Government’s influence. It is necessary to clarify that it is not only about denying the right to vote to the blacks, instead it deals with the opposition to the Federal Government’s intervention in the South. In fact, Jean Louise is also against the government’s intervention in the daily life of the American inhabitants (“Well Sir,

there they were, tellin'us what to do again [...] in trying to satisfy one amendment, it looks like they rubbed out another one. The tenth.” (Lee, *Watchman* 239)). For this, a lot of conservationists, as Atticus, firmly believe that the only one who is free is the one who does not depend on the government's help. For example, in the 1950s and 1960s, the South was beginning its own industrialization and former farmers tuned into labourers at the factories and a new social class emerged there, as it is explained by Uncle Jack:

“America's brave new Atomic world and the South's just beginning its Industrial Revolution. Have you looked around you in the past seven or eight years and seen a new class of people down here? [...] Were are your tenant farmers? In factories. Where are your field hands? Same place. Have you ever noticed who are in those little white houses on the other side of the town? Maycomb's new class. The same boys and girls who went to school with you and grew up on tiny farms. Your own generation. [...] those people are the apples of the Federal Government's eye. It lends them money to build their houses, it gives them a free education for serving in its armies, it provides for their old age and assures them of several weeks'support if they lose their jobs” (Lee, *Watchman* 198)

Both Atticus and Jack see the economic help of the Government as a mistake. Atticus firmly believes that blacks are not an advanced race, that they are not ready to achieve the full citizenships yet. The only reason that moves the government and the NAACP to allow them to vote is to control as they pleased a mass of electors. Consequently, Atticus has been severely criticized for what he thinks about blacks:

[...]“Have you ever considered that you can't have a set of backward people living among people advanced in one kind of civilization and have a social Arcadia? [...] Then let's put this on practical basis right now. Do you want Negroes by the carload in our

schools and churches and theaters? Do you want them in our world? [...] white is white and black's black [...] What would happen if all the Negroes in the South were suddenly given full civil rights? I'll tell you. There'd be another Reconstruction. Would you want your state governments run by people who don't know how to run 'em? [...] Honey, you do not seem to understand that the Negroes down here are still in their childhood as a people. [...] They've made terrific progress in adapting themselves to white ways, but they've far from in yet. [...] So, can you blame the South for wanting to resist an invasion by people who are apparently so ashamed of their race they want to get rid of it? [...] Jean Louise, they're trying to wreck us [...]" (Lee, *Watchman* 242; 245; 246-247).

It cannot be denied that Atticus is against integration and that he supports the supremacy of the white race. It should be remembered that he expressed in *Mockingbird* his belief that black people are inferior, as I clearly defended in the previous chapter. Personally, I think that instead of hating blacks, it has to deal with the loss of white's power. Similar to Amasa Coleman Lee's point of view, he took a conservative position regarding white supremacy and, as Atticus, he defended the rights of the states instead of the Federal Government (Crespino 46).

As a last point, it could be argued that chapter seventeen is complemented by chapter eighteen. Jean Louise has confronted her father, she has vented her fears, even she has called her father "Hitler" and "double-dealing, ring-tailed old son of a bitch" (Lee, *Watchman* 252-253) because she is not able to confront the reality. She really needs a boost that comes in the form of a slap from her uncle Jack. He is going to sum up the change in the relationship between father and daughter:

"[...] It's still there, isn't it?"

“[...] Everything’s still there. It happened. It was- But you know, it’s bearable somehow.”

“[...] Do you know why it’s bearable now, my darling? [...] because you are your own person now [...] now you, Miss, born with your own conscience, somewhere along the line fastened it like a barnacle onto your father’s. As you grew up, when you were grown, totally unknown to yourself, you confused your father with God. You never saw him as a man with a man’s heart, and a man’s failings- I’ll grant you it may have been hard to see, he makes so few mistakes, but he makes ’em like all of us. You were an emotional cripple, leaning on him, getting the answers from him, assuming that your answers would always be his answers [...] When you happened along and saw him doing something that seemed to you to be the very antithesis of his conscience- your conscience- you literally could not stand it [...] You have to kill yourself, or he had to kill you to get you functioning as a separate entity” (Lee, *Watchman* 264-265).

This chapter may help to explain the following question, as mentioned earlier: Is Atticus Finch a bigot or a hero? This question is answered by Uncle Jack. Atticus is just a man who has been confused with a kind of god. Scout has been contributing to it, she has offered to us a vision of her father mixed with her own conscience but now, it is time for the reader to kill the venerated Atticus Finch in order to see the real Atticus.

Certainly, until the publication of *Watchman* in 2015, many readers have been blinded to the real Atticus, idolizing him and building his pedestal as a hero. Especially the Southerners, as Mark Bagget argues:

Southerners have appropriated Atticus as the mirror image of their better selves. [...] The symbol of this heroic defender of racial justice allowed them to claim a noble heritage and celebrate their part in racial progress, while ignoring the links to their true heritage of slavery and racism. (Bagget 4)

This hero is as a consequence of the time in which he was born. Although *Mockingbird* is set in the 1930s, it was published in 1960. At this time, the civil rights movement was a fact and people in the South needed to believe in someone who represented a better version of themselves. Harper Lee gave them the perfect one. A figure based on a real great man, A. C. Lee, who won the respect of the southerners. Harper Lee tried to emulate through Atticus a premise that she firmly believed: the equality for every American. She also tries to show the South that she has known all her life. As time went on, many critics, as Monroe Freedman, tried to demystify Atticus but it was not until 2015 when *Watchman* was published that Atticus Finch showed his colours. In addition, no one may better explain the reader's relationship with the novels than Allen Mendenhall:

[...] Readers appear to be as outraged as Jean Louise to discover that their understanding of Atticus was limited, sentimentalized, anachronistic, and glamorized.

[...] Our reading of *Watchman* informs our reading of *Mockingbird*, and vice versa.

[...] We should not unconditionally condemn Atticus for being a man of his time, a product of the culture in which he lived and breathed [...]. (Mendenhall 8-9)

From a personal point of view, Atticus is not a hero or a bigot. He is just a man who has been idealized by his daughter. In fact, the “nigger-lover” Atticus is just the result of the necessity of an entire generation to show to the world a new kind of man of the South. In a similar way, he is not a “nigger-hater”- he is too polite to hate –he, as A. C. Lee, is just afraid of the government as well as of the NAACP; he just feels threatened by the advance of the black community as many of his neighbours. Personally, he is not the typical white segregationist who tries to fight with violence; on the contrary, he always respects others' points of view. For instance, in the last chapter, Atticus not only shows respect for Jean Louise's beliefs, but he is also proud of her:

“You may be sorry, but I’m proud of you [...] Well, I certainly hoped a daughter of mine’d hold her ground for what she thinks is right- stand up to me first of all” (Lee, *Watchman* 277). As a reader, I think that maybe he just needs “to kill” us in order to allow us to see the real Atticus.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The main goal of my current project has been to determine whether Harper Lee's protagonist, Atticus Finch, is an example of tolerance or an inveterate bigot. Each section has analysed aspects of Atticus in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman*, respectively, in order to illustrate that both novels have to be read as "a sort of palimpsest" (Kelley 238). *Mockingbird's* Atticus complements the other one in *Watchman*. In fact, *Go Set a Watchman* was a draft written before *To kill a Mockingbird* so, as Joseph Crespino wonders: "Perhaps Lee was able to write the Atticus of *Mockingbird* only after having written the Atticus of *Watchman*" (Crespino 105). In my opinion, as I asserted in section 4, what most has changed is not only Atticus, but the time in which both novels take place. This idea is also supported by Mendenhall:

Atticus should be treated as Atticus, the man he was, even in fiction, [...] Atticus was never a liberal hero or a racially progressive icon. He was never divorced from social and historical context [...] Atticus appears not as an aberration or an outlier in his commitment to seemingly antithetical positions and conflicting moods and mindsets: He is American, through and through. (Mendenhall 10; 12)

As this author has asserted, what I have developed in these sections is the idea that Atticus is not a hero or a bigot; he is just a good American father of his time.

First of all, as argued in section 3, *Mockingbird's* Atticus represented the model that many southerners and lawyers wanted to imitate. Without a doubt there are many positive aspects to praise Atticus: he was a widower father, who raised his children besides his black housekeeper Calpurnia. She was treated with respect and she was loved by the Finches who considered their housekeeper another member of the family. That should not be a surprise because Atticus is well-known for treating people with

respect. On the other hand, he was not only a respected lawyer who defended an innocent black man, but he also represented the moral root of both his family and his community. These premises allow the reader to establish Atticus as a hero, but, it is necessary to take a more critical position in order to reconcile the Atticus of *Mockingbird* with his palimpsest in *Watchman*. For this reason, section 3 has focused on several negative aspects that Atticus reveals in Harper Lee's first published novel. It is necessary to take into account that the reader receives an image of this lawyer through the eyes of his beloved daughter. She is the narrator, so as a child, she is not able to understand many events of the novel that the reader has to interpret for himself. This is facilitated, of course, by Atticus's direct speech. In addition, as a member of an older family, Atticus's image is complemented by Maycomb's citizens.

Secondly, Mr. Finch has been defined as a hero by many critics, such as Joseph Crespino who asserts: "he vigorously defended a black man wrongly accused of raping a white woman. He did it because it was the right thing to do, pure and simple" (Crespino 10). This saying may contain some truth, Atticus took Tom Robinson's case because Judge Taylor had chosen him. He could not reject it because he felt that it was his obligation as a lawyer as well as a father. Atticus put his efforts into defending Tom, even faced a mob to protect him, because he thought that it was the right thing to do. Nevertheless, he has never stated in *Mockingbird* that his intentions were to fight against racial injustice; in fact, he took a passive posture and he even considered blacks as an inferior race, as I defended in section 3.

Besides that, he is praised for his mottos and his disagreement with being one person in home and another in public, but it is not entirely true. As I exemplified in subsection 3.2, both Atticus and Sheriff Tate lied about Bob Ewell's death in order to protect Boo Radley. To sum up, Atticus is not an example of tolerance but what cannot

be denied it is that he is a great lawyer and an incredible father. For me, the best nexus between *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman* is the relationship between Atticus and Scout.

Thirdly, *The Cambridge Dictionary* defines “bigot” as follows: “a person who has strong, unreasonable beliefs and who thinks that anyone who does not have the same beliefs is wrong”. I firmly believe that this definition does not fit Atticus at all, as I argued in section 4. A very prominent example is *Watchman*’s chapter seventeen, when Atticus is discussing with his beloved daughter; it is necessary to notice that Mr. Finch, rather than being unreasonable, always shows respect for Jean Louise’s opinions. On the contrary, the only one who seems to lose control is Jean Louise. At the end of the discussion, he even reacts to his daughter’s insults in tranquillity and he tells her: “I love you” (Lee, *Watchman* 253). Personally, Atticus’s intentions are not to impose his positions but to “kill” Scout’s conscious (Lee, *Watchman* 252). He has been aware of Scout’s idealization since she was a child in *Mockingbird*, and now he wants Scout to achieve her own image of the world and to defend her own beliefs. He has been waiting for this moment for years, as Uncle Jack confirms in chapter eighteen: [...] “You talk like you’ve known this a long time.” [...] “I have. So’s your father. We wondered, sometimes, when your conscience and his would part company, and over what” (Lee, *Watchman* 265).

From my point of view, the major themes of Harper Lee’s novels are clearly summed up in their titles: Scout was protected by Atticus in *Mockingbird* because “it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 119) and Scout represents this bird for me. Atticus has protected her from Maycomb’s “disease”: racism (Lee, *Mockingbird* 117). He even pushed her to go to New York to learn to be on her own: “[...] he said it was high time she started shifting for herself and why didn’t she go to New York [...]

he was growing old and he wanted to die safe in the knowledge that his daughter could fend for herself” (Lee, *Watchman* 117) . However, in *Watchman*, Atticus has to confront her in order to separate their conscience and allows Scout to be herself. As Uncle Jack asserts: “Every man’s island, Jean Louise, every man’s watchman, is his conscience. There is no such thing as a collective conscious.” (Lee, *Watchman* 264-265). Only when Jean Louise died and she was reborn, she was able to see the real Maycomb and the real Atticus, someone who had his own beliefs about racial integration.

In addition, I support the ideas defended by Allen Mendenhall about Atticus in *Go Set a Watchman*. I shared with him that one of the main themes of this novel is also “disillusion” and that “It’s a nondidactic lesson about understanding people in good faith and with clear head, attentive to their individual anxieties and motivations” (Mendenhall 12). From my point of view, it is not only Jean Louise who has failed in understanding Atticus’s motivation, but also readers. This premise should be explained in detail: as readers we commit a terrible mistake when we read *Go Set a Watchman*. We have been interpreting Atticus’s racial opinions in our own terms as he is defending segregationist ideals in 2019, rather than following his own advice: “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view [...] until you climb into his skin and walk around in it” (Lee, *Mockingbird* 39). We should avoid taking an anachronistic point of view when we analyse Atticus’s words. We have to put ourselves in Atticus’s shoes and try to imagine ourselves living in his times. As Claudia D. Johnson explains:

The setting is about 1957, over 20 years after Tom Robinson’s trial, in the same town of Maycomb, Alabama. Relations between blacks and whites in Maycomb have become much more openly contentious as black people have become increasingly vocal about the injustice of their situation, especially in the South. (Johnson, *Reading* 76)

By this time, as I pointed out in the contextualization section, civil rights movement were in their zenith. Southerners suffered a Civil War and a Reconstruction. They have not still recovered from the Great Depression and they have not forgotten slavery times. Harry L. Watson asserts:

“*Go Set a Watchman* provided an invaluable window on just what Massive Resistance felt like to white segregationist and dissenter alike[...]Whites saw authority figures forcing an unwelcome change. Blacks saw themselves in solitary danger, only guarded by precarious courage.” (Watson 3;5)

Blacks are fighting for their rights and they are slowly winning. The social atmosphere is chaotic and violent and southerners are reacting in the only way that they have known all their life: with segregation. Atticus's point of view, as A. C. Lee, stands in clear disagreement to African American's integration by several reasons, among which their conservative point of view is the most important one. They defend that black people are not ready to assume full citizenship as well as people should live without government intervention. For these reasons, Atticus has joined the *White Citizens Council*, however, it cannot be forgotten how rather than supporting violent acts, he is still the anti-violence man of *Mockingbird*. As Uncle Jack asserts, he lives for the law (Lee, *Watchman* 268). At that time, amazingly, it was laudable the fact that despite his opinions, he is still a gentleman and a rational man that we met in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

To conclude, unquestionably, there is much I have not been able to discuss, especially regarding Atticus's laudable aspects, however, I hope that my project will help future Harper Lee's readers to achieve a better understanding of this controversial character. I am sure that further research will continue in the future about Atticus Finch because this man is a legend who will never die.

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